



## background

Built in 1909, the historic Odell Building at 21 North Avenue was one of the first, if not the first, commercial buildings located on what is now known as North Avenue in Baltimore City, Maryland. During the mid-1800s, Taney Place was an upper-class residential boulevard of many free-standing estates and large rowhouses. The street began to transition to more high-end commercial use with the construction of 21 North Avenue, which housed the Auto Outing Company, a luxury Buick sales and service station, and Tuttle's Dancing Academy. Generations of Baltimore's upper-class took lessons at this academy, including Wallis Simpson, the Duchess of Windsor.

During the 1920s, the street became fully commercial and catered almost exclusively to wealthy patrons. During this time, the founder of Auto Outing Company, JM Robbins, changed the business name to Robbins Buick, to reflect an increased focus on car sales. This period was short-lived and came to an end with the Great Depression of 1929. Robbins Buick closed its doors in 1932, but the ballroom remained.

As the country recovered through the 1940s, the area around North Avenue shifted to serve the growing middle-class community and became a major point of connection for the city's eastern and western residential areas. With excellent streetcar services, North Avenue became a social and entertainment center for Baltimore's younger population, and the building became *the* social landmark. From the 1950s through the building's vacancy in 1992, the building housed several famous nightclubs and venues, the most iconic of which being Odell's. Opened in 1976, Odell's was Baltimore's premier disco venue through the 1980s and is often cited as the birthplace of Baltimore Club Music. Since the club's closing in 1992, the building has sat vacant and waiting for revitalization.

## the project

The redevelopment of the historic Odell building into the North Avenue Educational Hub will reactivate the 18,000 square foot landmark and become a new home to two Baltimore-based nonprofit organizations dedicated to enriching the lives of



### Total Development Costs:

\$6.7 Million



### NTCIC Financing:

\$1.7 Million NMTC Allocation -  
Irvin Henderson Main Street  
Revitalization Fund



### Project Partner:

Jubilee Baltimore



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students.

[\*\*Young Audiences of Maryland\*\*](#) is a state leader in connecting and engaging students in learning through the arts. For 70 years, Young Audiences of Maryland has connected students from pre-K to grade 12 with hundreds of artists to engage in hours of discovery, inspiration, and hands-on learning and engagement through the arts. The organization provides professional development and training for teachers and artists alike in the “use and understanding of arts integration, state curriculum, and Common Core Standards, creating opportunities for artists to learn how to bring their art to the classroom and enhance the curriculum.” They will be occupying the first and lower floors, allowing them to support the administration of their programming and to host professional development for teachers and school administrators.

Relocating their headquarters to the former Tuttle’s Dance Academy space, [\*\*Code in the Schools\*\*](#) is a local nonprofit organization that empowers Baltimore City youth to thrive in the 21st-century economy by expanding access to quality computer science education and building pathways from school to jobs and higher education. Through partnerships with the Baltimore City Public School System, Code in the Schools provides elementary and middle-school full-time Computer Science instruction in over a dozen schools during the school year. They also offer after-school and summer programs across the city on a range of topics from software application development to robotics, while providing curriculum, materials, and instructors to ensure quality programming with measurable outcomes.

## **economic & community impact**

The revitalization of this historic building, led by the nonprofit development organization [\*\*Jubilee Baltimore\*\*](#), will create positive community outcomes from the moment the first brick is laid. The construction team estimates the project will create 57 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs, all paying the Maryland Prevailing Wage (or higher). Additionally, the construction team will be working with [\*\*Project Jumpstart\*\*](#), a 14-week construction training program, to provide employment and training opportunities for Baltimore residents.

Once complete, the expanded space and lower rents will enable both organizations to hire additional employees, expand their training programs and help more children of Baltimore. In total, the project will create and retain 62 permanent jobs, all of which will pay a living wage (or higher), and provide healthcare, paid leave, retirement benefits, job training, and opportunities for advancement. The large space for Code in the Schools will help up to 50 students gain access to computer science education courses on-site every day during the school year.

The project financing was made possible, in part, the New Markets Tax Credit, provided by NTCIC’s [\*\*Irvin Henderson Main Street Revitalization Fund\*\*](#). This innovative use of the New Markets Tax Credit supports historic preservation efforts in Main Street communities that are of a development cost that may preclude them from some federal incentive programs. The project also utilized state and federal Historic Tax Credits, provided by additional funding partners. The North Avenue Educational Hub will see its new tenants by the end of the year.